

to have you back. They're proud of your service, and so is our country. On behalf of all Americans, welcome home, and job well done.

We also honor all of our fellow Americans serving far away from home during the holidays. Separation from loved ones is especially difficult this time of year. Our people in uniform can know that their families miss them and love them, that millions are praying for them, and that America is grateful for the men and women who serve and defend our country.

The story of Christmas is familiar to us all, and it still holds a sense of wonder and surprise. When the good news came first to a young woman from Nazareth, her response was understandable. She asked, "How can this be?" The news would bring difficulty to her family and suspicion upon herself. Yet, Mary gave her reply, "Be it unto me according to Thy word." The wait for a new king had been long, and the manner of his arrival was not as many had expected. The king's first cries were heard by shepherds and cattle. He was raised by a carpenter's son.

Yet this one humble life lifted the sights of humanity forever. And in His words we hear a voice like no other. Across the generations, the poor have heard words of hope, the proud have heard words of challenge, and the weak and the dying have heard words of assurance. And mankind has

been given a message first delivered by angels on a shepherd's field: "Fear not."

As we near Christmas in a time of war, these words bring comfort. We don't know all of God's ways, yet the Christmas story promises that God's purpose is justice and His plan is peace. At times this belief is tested. During the Civil War, Longfellow wrote a poem that later became a part of a Christmas carol, "Hate is strong and mocks the song of peace on Earth, good will to men."

That poem also reminds us that hate is not the final word: "Then pealed the bells more loud and deep, 'God is not dead, nor doth He sleep, the wrong shall fail, the right prevail, with peace on Earth, good will to men.'"

And now as an expression of our own hope for peace in this Christmas season, we light the national tree. Maggie Stuempfle and Andre Joyner are with us here. They're members of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. Laura and I would like to ask Maggie and Andre to come up, and we'll turn on the lights. But I ask you all to join us in a national count down, starting with five, four, three, two, one.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:55 p.m. on the Ellipse during the annual Christmas Pageant of Peace. In his remarks, he referred to Father Dennis Kleinweber, pastor, St. Philomena Catholic Church, East Cleveland, OH.

Statement on the Decision To Terminate Temporary Safeguards To Help the Domestic Steel Industry

December 4, 2003

Today, I signed a proclamation ending the temporary steel safeguard measures I put in place in March 2002. Prior to that time, steel prices were at 20-year lows, and the U.S. International Trade Commission found that a surge in imports to the U.S.

market was causing serious injury to our domestic steel industry. I took action to give the industry a chance to adjust to the surge in foreign imports and to give relief to the workers and communities that depend on steel for their jobs and livelihoods.

These safeguard measures have now achieved their purpose, and as a result of changed economic circumstances it is time to lift them.

The U.S. steel industry wisely used the 21 months of breathing space we provided to consolidate and restructure. The industry made progress increasing productivity, lowering production costs, and making America more competitive with foreign steel producers. Steel producers and workers have negotiated new groundbreaking labor agreements that allow greater flexibility and increase job stability. The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation has guaranteed the pensions of eligible steelworkers and retirees and relieved the high pension costs that burdened some companies. My jobs-and-growth plan has also created more favorable economic conditions for the industry, and the improving economy will help further stimulate demand.

To keep the positive momentum going, we will continue our steel import licensing and monitoring program so that my administration can quickly respond to future import surges that could unfairly damage the industry. We will continue negotiations with our trading partners through the Organiza-

tion of Economic Cooperation and Development to establish new and stronger disciplines on subsidies that governments grant to their steel producers. We will continue to pursue economic policies that create the conditions for steel producers, steel consumers—who rely on steel to produce goods ranging from refrigerators to auto parts—and other U.S. manufacturers to succeed.

I strongly believe that America's workers can compete with anyone in the world as long as we have a fair and level playing field. Free trade opens foreign markets to American products and creates jobs for American workers, and an integral part of our commitment to free trade is our commitment to enforcing our trade laws. I am pleased the steel industry seized the opportunity we provided to regain its competitiveness and assist steelworkers and their communities. As a result, U.S. steel companies are now once again well-positioned to compete both at home and globally.

NOTE: The proclamation of December 4 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Luncheon in Baltimore, Maryland December 5, 2003

Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. Thanks for the warm welcome. Thanks for the bumper sticker. [*Laughter*] Thanks for making this such a successful event. Thanks for laying the foundation for what is going to be a victory in the State of Maryland in 2004.

I want to thank you for your contributions. I also want to thank you for the contribution of time you're going to make. [*Laughter*] We want you to help energize the grassroots, to put up the signs, and to get on the phones and to mail the let-

ters, all reminding your fellow citizens that we have a duty to vote in America; we have an obligation in a democracy to participate.

You know, the political season is going to come in its own time, and I'm getting ready. I'm loosening up. [*Laughter*] But I've got a job to do. Right now, I'm focused on the people's business, and there's a lot on the agenda. I will continue to work hard to earn the confidence of all Americans by keeping this Nation secure and strong and prosperous and free.